Information Services Committee  
Mandate and Terms of Reference  

December 14, 2001

1. Mandate

Reporting to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) through the co-chairs, the Director of Computing and Communications Services (CCS) and the Chief Librarian, the Information Services Committee (ISC) is responsible for recommending policy and strategic directions in the provision and use of information services in support of the teaching, learning, research, service and administrative missions of the University of Guelph.

Information services are defined broadly and encompass the management and provision of information, the use of information technology, and the application of these technologies, services and resources by academic units, academic support functions and administrative services. As examples this will include policy and planning regarding computing, networking, communications, major software/hardware acquisitions, IT standards, support for learning technologies and the management of information for campus wide initiatives.

As such the mandate of this Committee is focused on the strategic management of information services and information technologies rather than specific operational and technical issues. The Committee should be a planning and facilitating agent but not an arbitrator of the creation, ownership or usage of specific content which is the responsibility of individual units within the University.

The committee applies an overall institutional perspective in the evaluation of issues or concerns related to major information service activities. ISC works closely with other units, groups and committees where there are related objectives and seeks to achieve a common University direction while facilitating local innovation and practice.

A key role for ISC will be communication and co-ordination to ensure that users and providers of information services are aware of key issues and developments, and informed about the actions and activities of ISC and its constituent groups.

2. Specific Objectives

1. advise the Provost on matters relating to information services (including policies, procedures, responsibilities, accountability, funding and resource allocation).

2. create and maintain a strategic planning and implementation process that provides clear University direction and facilitates the most effective use of information services.
3. co-ordinate an integrated set of plans (from Colleges, academic support units and administrative services) particularly as they relate to priority needs, community benefits, financial planning and resource allocation and the effective balance of central and distributed responsibilities.

4. maintain an awareness of key policy issues with respect to information services and develop new policies and review existing policies as required.

5. evaluate existing and emerging information services to facilitate innovation, assess community benefit and promote best practices, and recommend action or changes.

6. maintain an awareness of user needs to ensure alignment of University plans and actions with changing community requirements including regular communication with key academic governance groups (e.g. BUGS, BoGS, Research Board).

7. ensure the development and maintenance of information services standards as they relate to interoperability, integration, shared services, security and provision of services or resources.

8. create and sustain an oversight and tracking mechanism to facilitate the planning, implementation and maintenance of major information services projects to ensure the most effective use of campus resources and to maximize community benefit.

9. create and maintain a clear division of responsibility, accountability and resource allocation among central service providers and distributed service providers to facilitate the achievement of their objectives and enable effective co-ordination, communication and seamless interconnections.

10. contribute to an informed community regarding information services and their application to the mission of the University (achieved, in part, through a periodic report to the community on the state of information services at the University).

3. Membership

Ron Elmslie, Director, Computing and Communications Services (Co-Chair)
Michael Ridley, Chief Librarian (Co-Chair)
Sandra McIntyre (Secretarial Support)
Chair, OVC IT Committee
Chair, OAC IT Committee
Chair, CBS IT Committee
Chair, CPES IT Committee
Chair, CSAHS IT Committee
Chair, COA IT Committee
Associate Vice-President Academic
Assistant Vice-President Human Resources (or designate)
Assistant Vice-President Finance (or designate)  
Associate Vice-President Student Affairs (or designate)  
Assistant Vice-President Research Infrastructure Programs  
Director, Communications and Public Affairs  
Director, Teaching Support Services  
Director, Office of Open Learning  
Registrar, Office of Registraitral Services  
Undergraduate Student Senator  
Graduate Student Senator  

Members are expected to have the authority and responsibility to act on behalf of the areas which they represent and to involve those areas to ensure effective communication throughout the University. Members are also expected to take a broad, inclusive perspective and advocate for all aspects of information services and to include other individuals, groups and perspectives where they can inform the deliberations of the committee.

Student members, appointed through the Office of the Secretary of Senate, will normally serve a 1 year term. Where members are designates it is anticipated that they will be reappointed each year to ensure that the designate continues to be the most appropriate representative.

4. Procedures

The committee will normally meet monthly. It is anticipated that much of the work of the committee will be to review reports from specifically mandated subcommittees or task groups and consider recommendations arising from these reports.

The subcommittees or task groups will largely be comprised of members of the University community with specific expertise or involvement in the area being reviewed. ISC members are expected to take leadership roles on these committees or groups.

5. Budget

The ISC will require a modest budget to offset its operational costs and to facilitate the research activities of the Committee or its subgroup (e.g. speakers, consultations, conferences). ISC may be allocated a specific budget by the Provost (e.g. the Microcomputer Fund).

6. Initial Agenda and Action Items

1. clarify and confirm objectives, processes and accountability of the committee and its constituent groups  
2. establish the strategic context within which ISC will operate  
3. determine priorities for ISC action and recommendations  
4. establish mandates for key subcommittees or task groups